

Message Text

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ACTION EA-01

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PA-01 INR-01 /004 W

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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON

TO USINFO WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 8890

UNCLAS RANGOON 3424

USIAC

FOR: IBS/IPS NEWS FEEDS

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJ: U THANT'S FUNERAL

RANGOON, DECEMBER 9, 1974 -- JUBILENT CROWD OF STUDENTS AND MONKS TRIUMPHANTLY RAISED COFFIN OF U THANT OVER HEAD AND THEN PLACED IT INTO THE STUDENT-BUILT MAUSOLEUM ON UNIVERSITY CAMPUS. THOUSANDS CHEERED. REJECTING THE GUB'S OFFER OF BURIAL SITE ON SLOPES SHWE DAGON PAGODA, STUDENTS INTERRED U THANT WEEK AFTER ARRIVAL BODY RANGOON.

MAUSOLEUM, APPROXIMATELY FIVE BY TEN BY FIVE FEET HIGH, AT PRESENT IS SIMPLE MONOLITH MADE OF BRICK AND MORTAR. AT ABOUT 1300 BST, THE BODY WAS SEALED INTO MONOLITH WITH BRICKS AND CEMENT.

STUDENT MARSHALS SUCCEEDED IN CONTROLLING EMOTIONAL CROWD, KEEPING ALL ONLOOKERS MORE THAN FIFTY YARDS FROM MAUSOLEUM.

TWO HUMAN CIRCLES WERE FORMED ON BURIAL SITE, EACH WITH THE MONOLITH AT THE TOP OF THE CIRCLE: FIRST INNER CIRCLE, ABOUT TWENTY YARDS IN DIAMETER MADE UP OF SAFRON-ROBED MONKS. SECOND LARGER CIRCLE, ABOUT FORTY YARDS IN DIAMETER, MADE UP OF MEN AND WOMEN STUDENTS.

FEW YARDS OUTSIDE BOTH CIRCLES, CROWD OBSERVED UNDER HOT NOON-DAY SUN. CROWD DENSITY INCREDIBLE - FIFTY, SIXTY DEEP -- PERSONS JAMMED TOGETHER, SURGING FORWARD AT INTERVALS. ONE COULD LITERALLY PICK UP HIS FEET AND NOT FALL DOWN. BEHIND THE TIGHTLY JAMMED DENSITY OF PEOPLE, THOUSANDS OF OTHERS SAT OR STOOD QUIETLY, LISTENING IF NOT ABLE TO SEE THE PROCEEDINGS.

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OUTSIDE THE FENCE ON UNIVERSITY AVENUE, THE SAME SCENE OCCURRED.

CROWD FILLED STREET LENGTH ABOUT THREE CITY BLOCKS. POLICE CLOSED OFF UNIVERSITY AVENUE FROM INYA ROAD TO INSEIN ROAD. ACROSS STREET, HUNDREDS STUDENTS CLIMBED ON ROOFS OF UNIVERSITY BUILDINGS.

STUDENT LEADERS LED CHANTING CROWD WHICH ALSO CHEERED ARRIVAL DELEGATIONS MONKS AND STUDENTS.

A UN FLAG, A BUDDHIST FLAG AND A STUDENT ORGANIZATION FLAG FLEW BEHIND TOMB AT HALF MAST, IN CONTRAST TO FULLY HOISTED GUB FLAGS OFF CAMPUS. ALSO BEHIND TOMB, LARGE PORTRAIT, U THANT, APPROXIMATELY SIX BY EIGHT FEET, ENGLISH POSTER DECLARING "U THANT'S MEMORIAL" AND IN BURMESE, SIMPLY, "U THANT, BURMAN."

DEMONSTRATION MARKED BY CALM. ONLY POLICE IN EVIDENCE FACILITATED CROWD AND TRAFFIC CONTROL, DID NOT ATTEMPT INTERFERE. HANSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, DEATHS, STATE FUNERALS, MONUMENTS, STUDENTS, CLERGYMEN
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 DEC 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974RANGOO03424
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740356-0352
From: RANGOON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741251/aaaabrvq.tel
Line Count: 74
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MorefiRH
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 JUN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 JUN 2002 by colstocv>; APPROVED <05 FEB 2003 by MorefiRH>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: U THANT'S FUNERAL RANGOON, DECEMBER 9, 1974 -- JUBILENT CROWD OF STUDENTS AND
TAGS: PFOR, (U THANT)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005